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Washington Roundup

Black Magic

One of Washington's great tribal rites is the annual stag dinner of the military order of the Carabao, whose members served in the Philippines up to 1946. The high point is a series of skits written and acted by the members. Among the great and near-great attending the shindig was Frank Carlucci, deputy secretary of Defense, who watched a phony admiral and general puzzling over how Cuba's Fidel Castro and Libya's Muammar Qadhafi find out things. Said the general: "Everybody knows that. It's those leaks." Enter a leaker, wired for sound, and when the admiral asks what he has been through, the leaker sings, to the tune of "That Old Black Magic":

"That lie detector has me on its wires
That lie detector that Carlucci hires
Those cold electrodes they attach to me
The same old questions that they ask of me
Those nervous needles and that squiggly line
That tell the whole world if those leaks are mine
Oh, up and down it goes, scribbling all it knows
'Bout those leaks to the New York Times.

"I could tell the truth: what good would that do?
I could confess! Well—more or less.
Each day I read the Washington Post
I wonder if I must give up the ghost.

"For every time I see a polygraph
I break into a little nervous laugh
And shake and squirm and drip with sweat
Then I try to hold my breath, die a little death
In a jam—wishing that I could scam
Until that lie detector clears me."

—Washington Staff